



MALURUS SPLENDENS.

J & E Gould del.

C. Hullmandel Imp.

MALURUS SPLENDENS.

Banded Wren.

Saxicola splendens, Quoy et Gaim., Voy. de l'Astrol., Zool., tom. i. p. 197. pl. 10. fig. 1.

Malurus pectoralis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part I. p. 106.

Djur-jeel-ya of the Aborigines of the lowland, and *Jeer-jal* of the Aborigines of the mountain districts of Western Australia.

THIS species may very justly be considered as more gorgeous and resplendent than any other of its race, its whole plumage sparkling with beautiful shining metallic lustres, beyond the power of our pencil to imitate in a drawing. At the time I gave a description of this little beauty in 1837, I was totally unaware that it had been previously published in France, and I am gratified that an opportunity is now afforded me to correct my error, and to figure it under the very appropriate specific title conferred upon it by Messrs. Quoy and Gaimard.

The *Malurus splendens* is an inhabitant of the western coast of Australia; but over what extent of country it may range cannot be ascertained, until the further progress of geographical research in this portion of Australia enables us to solve the problem. It is, I believe, very generally distributed over the Swan River settlement, where I am informed it inhabits scrubby places and underwood, sallying forth over the more dry and open forest during the day, and choosing, as Mr. Gilbert thinks, swampy places to roost in; at least he observed it returning to such situations in great numbers in the evening just before dark; and he moreover states, that not more than two males, or rather birds in colour, were observed to five females, or birds in the brown plumage; for, like the other members of the genus, the gorgeous colouring is only seasonal.

Its song very nearly resembles that of the Van Diemen's Land species, *M. longicaudus*. It breeds in September and the three following months: the nest is constructed of dried, soft grasses, and lined either with hair, wool or feathers, is of a dome-shape, the cover of the top resembling the peak of a cap, and is about six or eight inches in height: the eggs are generally four in number, of flesh-white, thickly blotched and freckled with reddish brown, especially at the larger end; eight and a quarter lines long by six and a quarter lines broad. The situation of the nest is much varied, being sometimes built among the hanging clusters of the stinkwood tree, at others among the upright reeds growing just above the water's edge on the borders of lakes and the banks of rivers.

The stomach is muscular, and its food consists of insects of various kinds.

The male in its summer dress has the crown of the head, back, scapularies, and upper tail-coverts deep metallic blue; ear-coverts verditer-blue; throat and all the under surface deep shining violet-blue; lores, crescent-shaped mark across the chest and back of the neck deep velvet-black; external edges of the wing-feathers green; tail greenish blue, indistinctly barred with a darker tint; bill black; eyes and feet blackish brown.

The female has the bill, lores and circle round the eyes reddish brown; crown of the head and all the upper surface brown; the external margins of the wing-feathers slightly tinged with green; tail as in the male, but paler, and slightly tipped with white.

The Plate represents a male and female of the natural size.